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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 517
By Naifeh

A RESOLUTION to honor and congratulate Coach Jeff McFerran and the Covington High School Chargers on advancing to the semi-finals of the 1999 TSSAA Class AA State Football Playoffs.

WHEREAS, the elected representatives of the state of Tennessee are proud to honor those gifted young athletes who through their outstanding achievements on the field exemplify the spirit of competitive athletics; and

WHEREAS, the 1999 Covington High School Football Team has established itself as the preeminent football team in school history by reaching the semi-finals of the TSSAA Class AA State Football Playoffs, breaking the school record for most victories in a season in the process; and

WHEREAS, after completing Region 7-2A play with a perfect 5-0 record, and compiling a sterling 9-1 regular season ledger, the mighty Chargers roared to victory in the opening round of playoff action, trouncing Sheffield, 47-0; and

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WHEREAS, following a 9-0 win over Westwood in second-round play, Covington soundly defeated Memphis Ridgeway, 34-0, thus advancing to the semi-finals of the 1999 TSSAA Class AA State Football Playoffs; and

WHEREAS, the victory over Ridgeway was the twelfth for the Chargers this season, eclipsing the school record for most wins in a season previously held by the 1956, 1971 and 1997 Covington teams; and

WHEREAS, the team was impressive in its win over Ridgeway, as the Charger offense exhibited plenty of firepower by rolling out to a 28-0 lead; this was more than enough points for the vaunted Charger defense to ensure a victory; and

WHEREAS, in the game, the Charger defense held a potent Ridgeway offense to just 80 total yards, limiting the state's leading rusher, Radale Pearson, to 47 yards on 12 carries and sacking the quarterback five times; and

WHEREAS, led on offense by the one-two punch of running backs Darron White and Lareko Boykin, who each rushed for more than 1000 yards this season, and quarterback Jon Ashford, one of the premier signal callers in the West Tennessee area, the mighty Chargers easily outscored their opponents this year, 458-168, racking up an amazing 338 yards of total offense per game; and

WHEREAS, the team's success was also due in large part to the play of the Charger defense; led by linebacker John Poe, White at safety and linebacker Brandon Morton, Covington stymied opposing offenses enroute to compiling its third consecutive undefeated season in Region play; and

WHEREAS, in the three playoff games leading up to their epic battle with the Milan Bulldogs, Covington's defense had not given up a single point, nor did it allow an opponent to advance inside the Charger's 10 yard line; and

WHEREAS, although the Chargers were stopped just short of a birth in the prestigious Clinic Bowl in Nashville, they have represented their school, their families and their school in a manner befitting a true champion; and

WHEREAS, those players who distinguished themselves on the field this season include: Darron White, who rushed for 1128 yards, scored 17 touchdowns, picked off three interceptions, and scored 162 total points; Lareko Boykin, who rushed for 1216 yards and scored seven touchdowns; Jamal Hill, who rushed for 184 yards and one touchdown; Jamara Hill, who rushed for 186 yards and one touchdown; John Poe, who rushed for 228 yards and four touchdowns; Thurman Jones, who distinguished himself as a runner and a pass receiver with one rushing and one receiving touchdown; Quarterback Jon Ashford, who passed for 917 yards and 13 touchdowns; Wally Smith, who racked up 222 receiving yards and four touchdowns; Dabney Maxwell, who scored four touchdowns and had two interceptions; sackmasters Brandon Morton and Clarence Mason, who combined for five sacks; and kicker Douglas Myers, who made nine of twelve field goal attempts and converted 43 of 55 points after touchdowns; and

WHEREAS, Coach McFerran and his assistants have done a remarkable job of molding the team's talent into a superior team who dominated gridiron action in West Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, these outstanding young men have distinguished themselves not only as great athletes and true champions, but also as peerless sportsmen and gentlemen of whom their parents, teachers, coaches, classmates and the members of this General Assembly are very proud; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That we hereby honor and congratulate Coach Jeff McFerran and the Covington High School Chargers on advancing to the semi-finals of the 1999 TSSAA Class AA State Football Playoffs, and extend to them our best wishes for every future success.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.